



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

and
U.S. COAST GUARD

March 22, 2011



A message to our maritime industry partners:

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is monitoring the evolving situation in Japan carefully to ensure the safety of all cargo and vessels arriving in the United States.

As the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and other experts have indicated, we do not expect to see harmful levels of radiation reaching the United States from damaged Japanese nuclear power plants. As a result of the Japanese Government's efforts to create a safety zone around the Fukushima Dai'ichi Nuclear Power Facility, we have been advised by technical experts that the exposure of the general population and its industries in the affected area has been minimal to date. Accordingly, cargo and vessels arriving from Japan will contain little radiological contamination – well below harmful levels, if any. However, out of an abundance of caution, DHS is implementing additional radiation screening procedures.

Since 9/11, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has employed radiation detection technology at Ports of Entry that can determine the presence of radioactive materials or contamination. All CBP and USCG frontline personnel are equipped with Personal Radiation Detectors (PRD), a personal radiation device that provides effective notice of any health risk.

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has implemented additional protocols for vessels transiting within 50 miles of the Fukushima Dai'ichi reactors in Japan. For these vessels only, USCG will perform additional screening prior to entry into a U.S. Port in accordance with current protocols and Captain of the Port (COTP) authority. USCG will follow longstanding resolution protocols for any radiation detection readings.

CBP has issued field guidance reiterating its radiation detection operational protocols and directed field personnel to monitor sea traffic from Japan. CBP has not changed our standard screening protocols for radiation detection. Out of an abundance of caution, we have provided guidance to our port directors to meet vessels arriving from Japan at their first port of arrival to conduct additional screening. This will encompass a radiation assessment of the vessel and pier-side screening of a sample of the cargo as it is off-loaded.

When processing cargo arriving from Japan, CBP frontline personnel will follow longstanding resolution protocols for any radiation detection readings. When officers receive a standard radiation detection alert, our protocol requires that the cargo to be referred for a secondary screening. To identify the source of an alarm, officers use sophisticated technology to identify the level and type of radiation present. During this secondary processing, officers work with technical experts who determine if the radiation source is legitimate and at levels that do not pose a health hazard. If it is determined that radiation levels are unsafe in any way, CBP will notify the affected carrier and coordinate an appropriate response.

It should be noted that since the initial development of the event in Japan, no person, baggage, cargo or aircraft entering the United States has received a positive alert for harmful radiation levels as monitored by DHS. In fact, the radiation levels measured in the cargo shipments that have alarmed to date are lower than one would receive while watching television for several hours, and represent only a fraction of the radiation levels that one would be exposed to when receiving a chest X-ray or other radiological medical treatment.

DHS continues to evaluate the potential risks posed by radiation contamination on inbound cargo and will adjust its detection and response protocols in coordination with its interagency partners, as developments warrant. Additionally, we will continue to communicate our operational actions and responses to our partners in the maritime industry and we look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure the safe and expeditious movement of cargo from Japan.

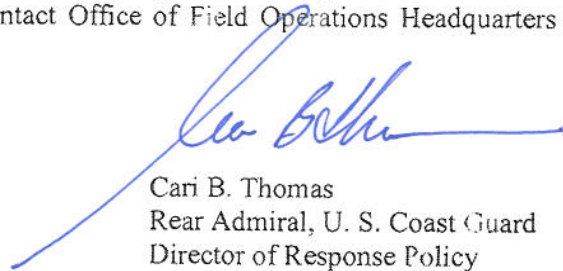
These procedures should not be interpreted to suggest that DHS believes that cargo from Japan poses a serious or high risk, but merely that DHS is committed to proactively applying preventive methods to this developing situation.

Should carriers have any concerns with USCG procedures, they are encouraged to contact the local USCG COTP

Should carriers have any concerns with CBP procedures, they are encouraged to contact the local CBP Port Director to resolve the issue or contact Office of Field Operations Headquarters at 202-344-1850.



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